

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510
September 24, 2009

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Skelton, Chairman Levin, Ranking Member McKeon, and
Ranking Member McCain,

As you work to conference H.R. 2647, the *Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)*, we are writing to express our strong support for the preservation of language which will allow the Department of Defense (DOD) to retroactively provide Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) benefits to members of the Armed Services. Due to a recent change in the DOD's position on the number of days of benefits that can be accrued under the PDMRA program, we also respectfully request that you eliminate the 40-day limit on PDMRA benefits currently included in both the House and Senate-passed *NDAA*.

Section 663 of the House-passed bill and Section 604 of the Senate-passed bill give the Pentagon the necessary legal authority to finally provide PDMRA benefits to troops who have so far been denied these benefits because of a delay between the announcement of the PDMRA program and the establishment of the program by the individual services. This glitch has affected over 20,000 Army National Guard troops across the country.

We appreciate you working with us to include this important authorizing language in both the House and Senate-passed bills, and we request that you ensure that the final *FY2010 NDAA* includes this language. We believe the preservation of this language in the final bill is critical to ensuring that these long overdue benefits are provided to troops as soon as possible.

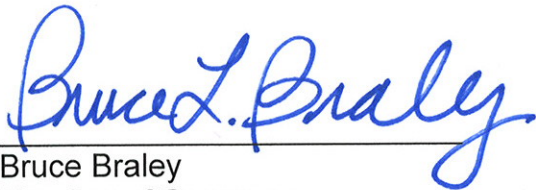
Section 663 and Section 604 also set the maximum number of PDMRA benefits to be provided to troops at 40 days of benefits. The DOD had

consistently indicated that it was not possible for Service members to earn more than 40 days of benefits under the PDMRA program, but has recently changed its position on this limit. The Army now estimates that nearly 100 former members of the Armed Services have accumulated more than 40 days of PDMRA benefits, and the DOD now concurs to eliminate any reference to a cap on PDMRA compensation in the final *FY2010 NDAA*.

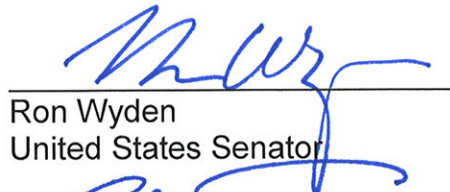
Due to this change in position by DOD, and because we believe that all affected troops should receive the full benefits that they have earned and deserve, we respectfully request that you remove any reference to a maximum number of days of PDMRA benefits in the final *FY2010 NDAA*.

Thank you for your work on the behalf of our men and women in uniform, and for your attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance to you on this issue.

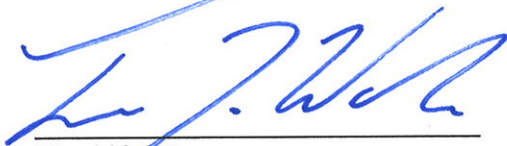
Sincerely,



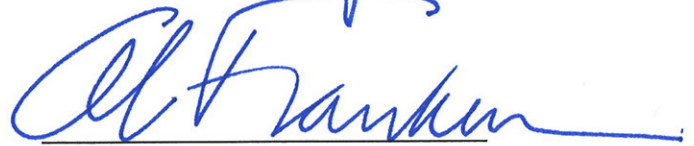
Bruce Braley
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Tim Walz
Member of Congress



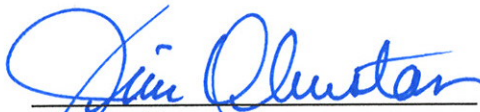
Al Franken
United States Senator



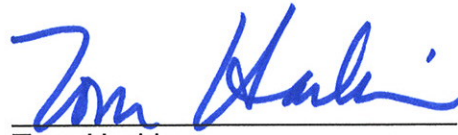
Colin Peterson
Member of Congress



Charles Grassley
United States Senator



James Oberstar
Member of Congress



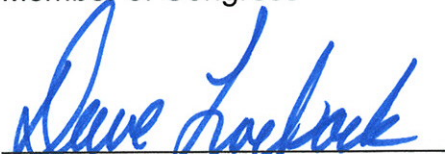
Tom Harkin
United States Senator



Leonard Boswell
Member of Congress



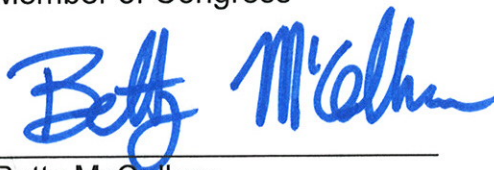
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



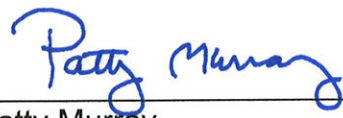
David Loebsock
Member of Congress



Frank Lautenberg
United States Senator



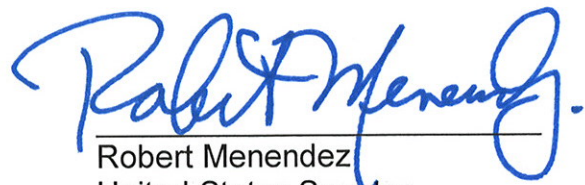
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



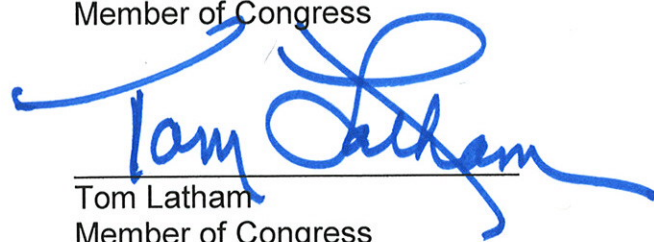
Patty Murray
United States Senator



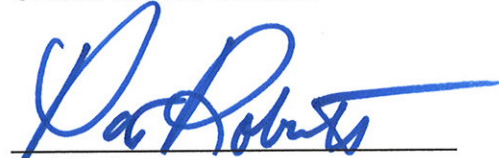
Erik Paulsen
Member of Congress



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Tom Latham
Member of Congress



Pat Roberts
United States Senator



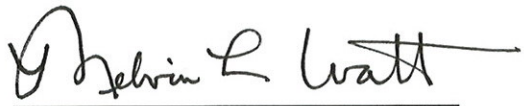
Steve King
Member of Congress



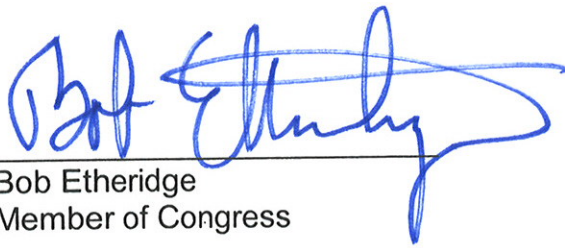
Michelle Bachmann
Member of Congress



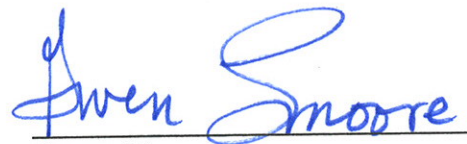
Bob Filner
Member of Congress



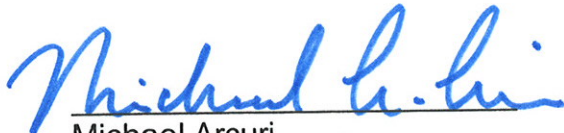
Melvin Watt
Member of Congress



Bob Etheridge
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



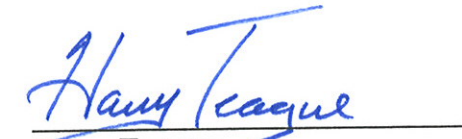
Michael Arcuri
Member of Congress



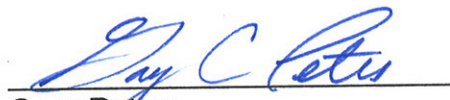
Eric Massa
Member of Congress



Michael Michaud
Member of Congress



Harry Teague
Member of Congress



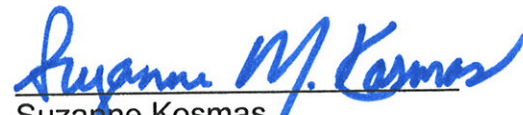
Gary Peters
Member of Congress




Kathleen Dahlkemper
Member of Congress



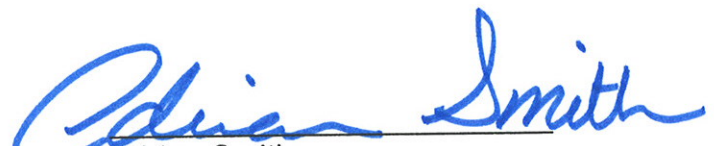
John Boccieri
Member of Congress



Suzanne Kosmas
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Adrian Smith
Member of Congress